

## Storage Tips & Tricks

**Strawberry Care**-Remove the strawberries from the farm container. Do not wash the berries before storing! Line a flat plastic or glass container with a paper towel. Place a single layer of fresh strawberries into the container. Cover with paper towel and seal with the lid or plastic wrap. Strawberries will last up to 4 days or longer depending on your refrigerator. Wash or clean them when you are ready to serve. Strawberries should be cleaned and hulled before freezing. I like to just wipe them with a soft moist cloth and then let them dry on paper towel. Place strawberries on a tray to freeze and then move them into a zip lock freezer bag or an air- tight container and be sure to get most of the air out of the bag (using the straw method works well) and they should be good for up to six months!

**Peas**, store in a plastic bag. Use within a day or two before the sugar turns to starch

**English peas** add to rice or risotto or pasta. Add raw peas to your favorite potato salad. **English Shelling Peas** have a waxy shell, and they are the largest of the 3 varieties. Pull the stem end along the seam and the pod will open. You can also push along that edge to create an opening. **All of the peas** should have the strings removed before preparation and serving. Save the pods for stock Serve **sugar snap peas** for a snack raw with or without a dip. Add sugar snap peas to a salad. Add the **snow peas** to a stir fry or open the pod and pipe an herb cheese or hummus for an appetizer.

**Kohlrabi**- Remove the leaves, prepare store separately. Leaves may be prepared like kale or collards. Use the leaves in a few days. Kohlrabi will last up to two weeks however it is best to use within a week. Kohlrabi can become woody if stored for too long. Peel slice and salt to serve as a quick appetizer with or without dip. Peel slice toss with olive oil sprinkle in some herbs, garlic, and parmesan. Roast in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment for 15-20 minutes, edges should be browned and crisp. Check the website for a kohlrabi slaw recipe.

**To store summer squash:** Summer squash can be kept in a plastic bag or container lined with a dry paper towel in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. **Summer squash is not** meant for long-term storage serve as quickly as possible after receiving shares. There are some recipes on the website filed under squash or zucchini

**Leafy greens**- Leafy greens have been washed and they will come to you damp. They have been watered or washed or iced. You can clean them when you receive them or as you use them. Either way before they are refrigerated, they should be dry, wrapped or layered in paper towel and stored in plastic, bags, or containers. **To clean greens:** Fill a pan **with warm** water, plunge in the leafy greens, you will find that most of the grit, dirt, will just fall away. Swish the greens. Allow to sit. Gently, lift out the greens, check the bottom of the pan for grit/sand/dirt. Repeat cold water until the water is completely clear, Drain and allow to dry. Wrap in paper towel and place in a plastic bag or layer paper towel in a container, Refrigerate Use the most tender greens 1<sup>st</sup> within a couple of days.

**Spinach**- can be washed and dried before storing. Store spinach wrapped in paper towel or in layers of paper towel. Dried leaves can keep up to one week. Wilted Spinach Salad, Creamed Spinach, Stir Fry, Sautee with Garlic, shallots, onion as a side or as a bed under Chicken, fish, sliced steak, Mix into eggs for omelets or fill the omelet, Wilt spinach into soups, stews, sauces, Greek Spinach Feta Pie, Spanakopita, Quiche, add spinach to smoothies, add to ricotta cheese for Lasagna for Spinach Stem Recipes, take a look at Pantryfun.com

**Radishes and Beets**- and all root vegetables. When the root vegetable comes to you with the tops attached you should cut the tops from the root and store in two separate containers. These are tender greens, use them within a few days. Roots should keep a week or more.

**The garden herbs** – dill will pair well with parsley, cilantro, chives, or basil. If you have full pots, start a new one and in the next weeks we will receive basil and Thai basil that can companion well with the dill.

**You will often receive a bunch of cut herbs:**

To keep fresh herbs: Remove dead stems and leaves, wash as needed. Snip the stems. Place stems in a container filled with water, do not submerge the leaves. Changing the water daily will help to keep the herbs fresh. They can keep up to a week on the counter. Or Cover the container with a plastic bag and refrigerate. If storing basil leave on the counter, **do not refrigerate**. Change water every day or two. Most fresh herbs will last more than a week when stored this way.

Chocolate mint can be used much the same as the spearmint that has been in the shares for a few weeks. A new idea that I read about is adding dried chocolate mint leaves to coffee grinds when brewing for added flavor.

**Mint Tea:** Boil a cup of water and clean and tear 8-10 mint leaves and add them directly to the cup or teapot (you will need a strainer). Allow the tea to steep for 10 minutes. Steeping longer will produce stronger tea. Leaves can be removed or left in the cup. Pouring from a pot you can pour through a strainer. Add a little lemon, honey, sugar, to taste. Mint leaves can also be added to a cup of your favorite tea steeping along with your tea bag for a little more flavor.

## Preserving the share

**How to Freeze Asparagus**

Prepare the following items:

Bring 1 gallon of water per pound of asparagus to a boil

Prepare an ice bath ice and ice water

Freezer containers / zip lock bags

Clean the asparagus to remove any grit, soil, and snap or cut off /break off the woody ends

Bring the water to a boil, keep the heat on high and immerse the asparagus, water should come back to a boil in one minute

Boil 1 ½ minutes for thin stems, 2 minutes for medium and 3 for fat.

Immediately remove and submerge into the ice bath. This will stop the cooking process.

When cold, drain, allow to dry on paper towels

Pack in airtight containers or bags

If using bags, close the bag almost to the end. Stick a straw into the bag and draw out as much air as possible from inside the bag. Press down on the straw as you continue to close the bag and pull the straw out. Label and date bags or containers.

**Herbs:**

*To oven dry fresh herbs:*

Pull the best leaves from their stems. Wash them, and then dry. Lay one layer of paper towels on a shallow baking sheet. Place the herb leaves on the paper towel in a single layer and avoid overlapping. Cover them with another paper towel and add another layer. Continue to layer your leaves up to 5 layers.

Dry them in a very low oven (170-180 F) for 3 to 4 hours. Leave the door open so the oven does not get too hot.

Watch the herbs very carefully and turn them with tongs occasionally. Remove the herbs from the oven as soon as they turn crisp. Allow the herbs to cool. Then, store your herbs in airtight containers, preferably glass, in a cool dark location. Herbs retain flavor and medicinal value for years. When ready to use, crumble and add to all of your favorite recipes.

Label your containers with the name of the herb and the date you dried them.

**To Freeze Herbs:** you will need- ice cube trays, freezer labels, freezer marking pen, either strong freezer bags or plastic containers.

Think about how often you may need each herb. It will be 6 months or so before you can cut

fresh herbs from the garden again.

Gather your herbs, chop them finely and pack into ice cube trays - add a spot of water to cover and put the trays into the freezer.

When your herbs are frozen solid, turn the cubes out and put them into a labeled poly bag or container - labeling is important here - they really all will look the same when you are ready to use them

**Freezing your fresh herbs** takes a bit of time, but you'll be rewarded with the taste of fresh throughout the winter months.

My recommendation is to try each method. Dry some, freeze some and when it comes to basil or cilantro make a pesto and then freeze that cilantro pesto can be added to a salsa and of course, pesto can be used all winter long. Prepare small portions of a pesto without walnuts or pine nuts, just basil, garlic & olive oil, you may freeze in small portions and add this to soups and stews and sauces all winter long.

## Week 6 2023—May 29th—June 4th

We continue to have beautiful springtime shares. Asparagus is always the first crop of the season, and it should be with us for a few more weeks. If you are thinking about freezing some, this might be the time to get started with that task. And now “ta da”, we will welcome the first fruit in the shares for this season. It will just be a taste this week, a little in each share to get everyone started and as excited as we are. The coming weeks will be a little different. I will include care and storage tips in the newsletter; however, I do believe that this week you will just eat them out of hand, maybe even on your way home!

Some of you will have peas in your shares. The variety is English shelling peas. They are coming to us from our friend in South Jersey. They are a couple of weeks ahead of us, so we have to wait just a bit until ours are ready. Save the pods for stock preparation. Summer squash and kohlrabi will come from the same farm while we wait for our own.

As we go out to the garden again this week, we are planting two more herbs. It has been a few years since we have seen Borage in our shares as a plant. Borage is loved by gardeners for its beautiful blue flowers. It is considered an annual plant; however, it is known to come back in gardens year after year because it will re-seed. The flowers are on many edible flower lists. They are great in a salad or candied on a special cake or cold dessert, even ice cream. Borage flowers would be a beautiful garnish in a glass of lemonade.

This might be a plant that you could place alone in its own container. One plant can spread 12-18”. If you prefer that it doesn’t self-seed, use the flowers as they appear so that they cannot drop seeds into your garden. Bonus, borage is known to attract butterflies.

Herbs were first used as medicinal remedies and borage is included. Borage has been used to control blood pressure, depression, and it is said to have anti-inflammatory properties, just to name a few. Always remember that herbal remedies can interfere with medications.

In the kitchen borage is often used in place of spinach. It can be used raw or cooked. The flavor of the leaves is very similar to cucumbers. Borage mint dip or soup or even tea. Add borage leaves to cold water for a refreshing infused beverage. This is a website that might give you some other ideas: [practicalselfreliance.com/borage-uses/](http://practicalselfreliance.com/borage-uses/).

Dill will be the second herb in the boxes. Dill is an herb that is very often used to enhance the flavor of cucumber. Last week I told you that cilantro is difficult to keep alive all season and dill is the other herb that no matter what I do, it will not last all season. If you have been with us for a few years, you may once again see some dill coming back because of self-seeding. It is a welcome volunteer.

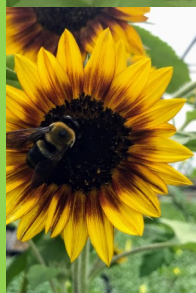
Before I close, I should remind you that the first pancake breakfast of the season is scheduled for next Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. Breakfasts are scheduled as each of the fruits we grow become in season. We will actually have 2 breakfasts for strawberries. Another will be held the following Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars, I hope we see you there.

As always you have any questions for me about recipes or your garden contact [jenn@alstedefarms.com](mailto:jenn@alstedefarms.com).

If your questions are administrative call 908-879-7189 or [Trish@alstedefarms.com](mailto:Trish@alstedefarms.com).

*Until next week, enjoy the freshness!*

*Jenn Borealo*



## Asparagus Risotto

4 T butter (divided)  
3 T olive oil  
1 chopped shallot  
2 cloves of garlic chopped  
1-2 cups of blanched asparagus cut into 1" pieces  
2 cups of Arborio Rice  
5 cup of Vegetable broth  
1 c dry white wine  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 t fresh thyme leaves  
½ Parmesan or Romano plus more for serving

Heat the olive oil and butter in a medium-large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the shallot and garlic. Meanwhile start to bring the broth to a boil

Add the rice and stir constantly until the rice is slightly browned. Add the wine and allow it to be absorbed completely. Stirring constantly

Add 1 ½ cups of broth and continue to stir. Broth will completely absorb into the rice. Repeat with another 1 ½ cups of broth and stirring.

Add

Add the remaining broth, 1 cup at a time, continuing to stir gently. Add the asparagus with the last addition of broth. Stir until broth is absorbed. Rice should be tender.

Add in a tablespoon or two of butter and gently stir in the parmesan.

Serve

Adapted from: The Monastery Garden Cookbook

## Wilted Spinach with Lemon and Wine

Olive oil  
4 cloves of garlic minced  
4-6 cups torn spinach leaves, cleaned, not dry  
1-2 t lemon juice  
1 T white wine

Over medium heat, warm the olive oil and add the garlic.

Cook for just a few minutes.

Do not allow garlic to brown or burn.

A little at a time, add the spinach leaves to the pan and allow them to wilt turning as needed.

At the last minute, and just before serving, add the lemon and wine.

## Week 6 Harvest

Asparagus  
Chocolate Mint  
Spinach  
Radish  
Kohlrabi  
Kale

Strawberries  
Beets  
Arugula  
Peas  
Summer Squash  
Borage & Dill Plants

*\*\*Your actual CSA share contents will be listed on the label inside of your box and may differ from this list. Your share contents are based on your individual preferences and customizations that you make on your Harvie profile, as well as changes in availability.*

## Zucchini Involtni

1 ½ c ricotta  
1 egg  
1/3 c parmesan  
½ -3/4 cup shredded mozzarella  
2-3 T chopped parsley  
Salt and pepper  
2 zucchini, washed, ends removed

Add the first 6 ingredients to a bowl and mix just until blended.

Preheat the oven to 375

Slice zucchini with a vegetable peeler 1/8" thick.

Place zucchini onto a baking sheet and lightly salt to sweat and soften.

Allow to sit 5 minutes or so. Blot the zucchini slices.

Pour some marinara, enough to coat the bottom of your baking dish.

Overlap 2 pieces of zucchini so that you have a wider ribbon of vegetable.

Top each ribbon with a Tablespoon or so of ricotta spread just a little and roll.

Place roll, end side down into the baking dish and continue until you have used all the filling and zucchini.

Any leftover zucchini can be chopped, sauteed, and added to the marinara sauce or saved for another use.

Spoon a little sauce over each roll.

Top with a little extra mozzarella and a sprinkle of parmesan if desired.

Bake loosely covered with foil for 20 minutes, remove the foil and continue to bake for an additional 15- 20 minutes.

Zucchini should be tender.

Garnish with a little chopped basil.

For the carnivore, add a little crumbled sausage

For a Vegan option, vegan ricotta and cheeses will work.